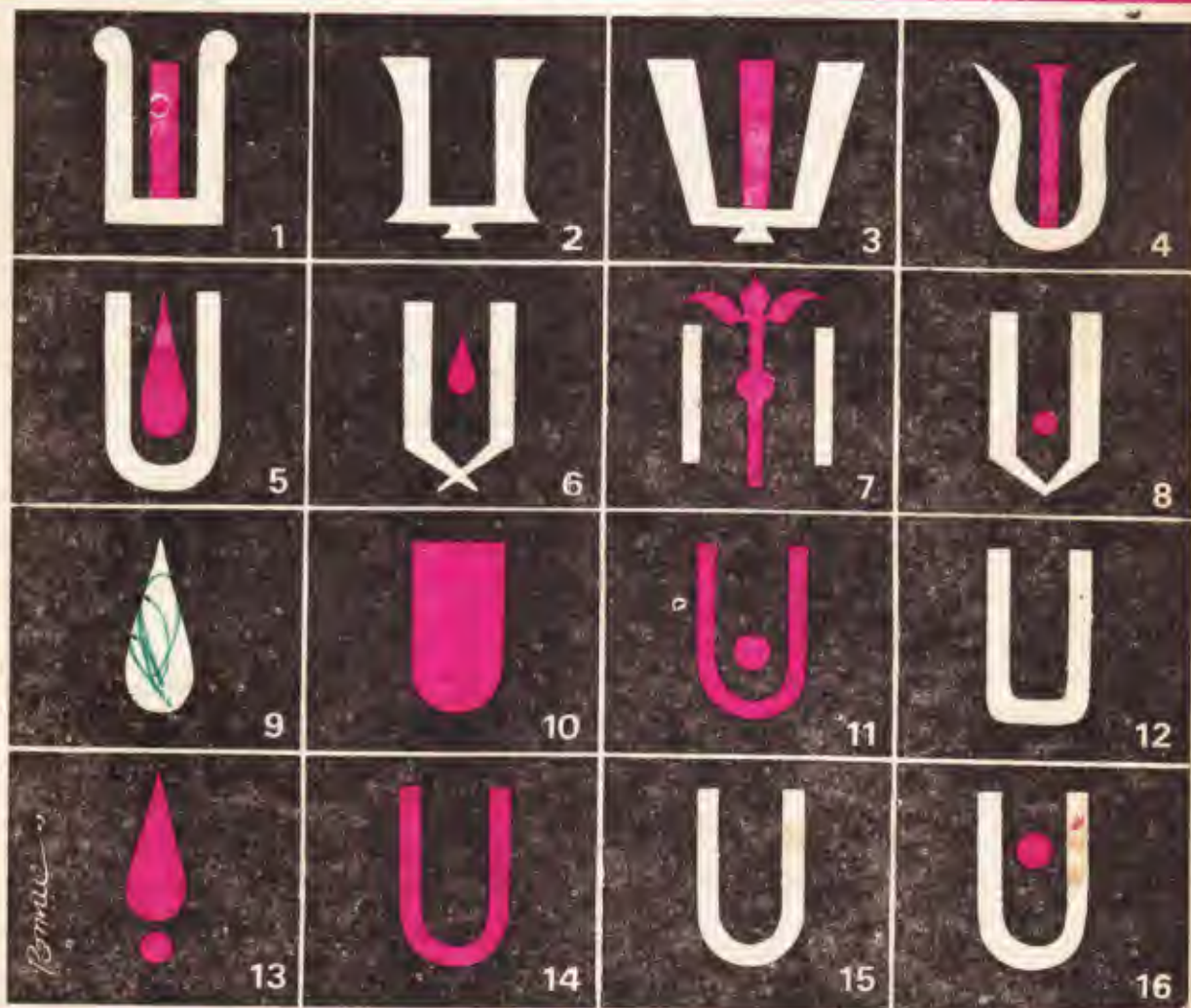


# Freeethought

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED RATIONALIST MONTHLY

BALAJI SPECIAL

OCTOBER 1977



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God is a myth; immortality an illusion; Religion, a gigantic fraud

## Readers' Letters

### EXPOSE BOHRAS!

Some of the Members of the Bombay Rationalist Association wish that a FREE-THOUGHT issue devoted entirely to the nefarious activities of the religious heads of Bohras be published as is being done for exposing other godmen.

.... V. A. Lokhandwala, Bombay. (The January, 1978 issue of FREETHOUGHT will be entirely on Islam.....Ed.)

### RELIGION KNOCKED OUT

I am a regular reader of FREETHOUGHT. In the past I believed in god and other superstitions. After I began reading your magazine, I completely lost my faith in god and religion. The August issue of our journal — especially the cartoon on the cover page is marvellous. I congratulate you very much on your efforts.

T. Sree Ranga Sreeniv Rao,  
Kakinada.

### SECULARISM IN REVERSE?

India is a "Secular Republic". But our government is spending public money to encourage and propagate a particular religion or community. Recent example is from Andhra Pradesh when six brahmin pundits were given cash awards of Rs. 1116/- by government of Andhra Pradesh for their 'scholarship' in Vedas.

Besides this, their wives were also given sarees and blouse pieces. The expenses for their travel and three days' stay at Hyderabad were also met from the government treasury. It is understood from the reports that these awards are in vogue for many years. Why cannot I. R. A. challenge this kind of unconstitutional activities in courts?"

—Narayanan Periya, Thayanoor.

### COERCION BY BALAJI'S DEVOTEES

Sir,

A letter has been received by one of my friends. The address of the sender is not mentioned in the letter. But it is very clear that the intention is to propagate the name of the so-called Venkatachalapathy of Tirupathi. The receiver is directed to address similar letters to 20 other persons (Sai Baba also resorts to this trick). The author of the letter knowingly or unknowingly contaminates the minds of innocents and gullibles causing a fear of the imaginary wrath of Venkatachalapathi. If the chain of correspondence is broken. It is a pity that even the educated people are indulging in such mischievous propaganda without thinking of the consequences. It weakens the reader psychologically. It is a waste of time and money. The Postal Department is burdened with unnecessary letters.

— T. R. Gangadharan, Madras.

### NAMAMS ON COVER PAGE

Vaishnavites use different types of "NAMAS" (caste marks on foreheads) denoting the sub-sects to which they belong. Though there are more than 30 varieties for want of space only 16 specimens are published on the cover page. The following are the details of sects sporting these namams:—

Picture No.	Name of the sect
1. & 2	Sri Sampradaya founded by Sri Ramanuja
3.	Tengalal section of the Sri Sampradaya
4.	Tengalals
5.	Vadagali section of Sri Sampradaya
6 & 7.	Followers of Sri Ramananda
8.	Followers of Ramanandha but worshipping Janaki
9.	Followers of Kabir
10. & 11.	Followers of Sri Vallabha
12.	Followers of Sri Chaitanya or Lord Gauranga
13.	Followers of Malukdas — 1574 A. D.
14. & 15	Followers of Charandas called Charandasees—1730 A. D.
16.	Followers of Pean-Nath called Pranatanthees

(Source : "Monograph on the religions sects in India among the Hindus" printed in 1928)

## Thought for the month

"HINDU TEMPLE: A museum of stone image of varied size and kind; a miniature hill worked up into a nasty den which serves as a convenient place for honourable debauchery and idle living in the name of God."

— Kuthoosi Guruswamy

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Editor  
**C. A. SESHADRI**

OCTOBER 1977

# Free thought

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[No. 10

## TIRUPATHI A GREAT DRAIN

The ignoramus who started idol-worship would have little imagined that he was doing a great disservice to posterity. In the days of old, when life was leisurely and transport slow, artisans could have been employed to carve out temples and idols out of rocks and people could visit them. It is indeed a pity that people are not able to grow out of this habit in the last quarter of the 20th century when time is considered the greatest economic asset. There is no way of justifying the visit of a crore of people annually to Tirupathi. It couldn't be treated as a pleasure trip because the journey uphill could not be pleasant in buses under Indian conditions. In fact carrying young children for shaving their heads is indeed one of the laborious tasks of superstitious parents. Financially, it imposes a severe strain. Not infrequently one has to borrow to redeem one's 'pledge' to a non-existent deity.

Even if we take it that a pilgrim stays only for a day, the colossal loss of 1 crore man-days to a poor nation like ours could not be justified. While the temple collects Rs. 12 crores in a year, at least ten times that amount would have been wasted on travelling, boarding and lodging expenses.



## BALAJI AND THE PRESIDENT

What do they expect in return? Peace of mind to a person who is chronically in debt and diseased? Balaji who blessed the first citizen of this country with lung tumour could not be more favourably inclined towards the ordinary man whose plight he has ignored for thousands of years. That the President of India should have made it his first task after assuming office to visit Tirupathi before taking part in any social function would sum up his superstitious belief. That Balaji is helpless to prevent the spread of cholera (the toll has been heavy this year) only proves conclusively the inability of any idol to help in mitigating the sufferings of the people. That our ancestors steeped in faith reaped nothing better than hard labour and abject poverty should be an eye-opener to millions of our countrymen. That the religious people cleverly avoid publicising the failures whilst advertising a few accidents as 'successes' in itself shows their hypocrisy, hollowness, insincerity and, or deceitful mentality.

It cannot be denied that a whole group of parasites in the form of priests, muttheads, swamijis, babas and others have a vested interest in perpetuating this system. Though the expected income of Tirupathi is Rs. 12 crores through public contribution there is more that is generated by investing the surplus money. In what manner this surplus is accounted and utilised is not made public. We are all aware that balance sheets hide more than what they reveal. Tirupathi is no exception.

We have perforce to demand that all contributions to Tirupathi should be receipted to avoid dumping of black money and circumventing of tax laws. We also demand

that the income of the temple should be taxed so that part of the avoided taxes is collected by the exchequer. In the name of temple property, lands are cultivated and the bounty shared amongst priests and temple parasites. It is high time that the hereditary rights of families who are ruling the roost is put an end to. If a clean broom is used, the accumulated dirt would put to shame the most corrupt regime of all times in the whole world. People are silenced by instilling fear and through indoctrination. This is the worst autocracy that could be practised. Is it not time we put an end to this regimentation of the mind?

## PRIME MINISTER'S TIRUPATHI VISIT

Under these circumstances, it is indeed regrettable that the Prime Minister of the country should have decided to visit Tirupathi in spite of being advised by temple authorities that the town was not safe because of the prevalence of cholera. What does he try to prove? Is he trying to show that if one had faith one would not be affected by cholera? Will he accept the challenge and drink the municipal water consumed by the common man? Has he not learnt a lesson from Mr. SanjivaReddy? If he is not affected by cholera does he think that people will all turn towards religion instead of going to a doctor for preventing or curing cholera? It is indeed a tragedy that a secular government should be headed by such men.

Morarjis and Sanjivas can come and go. Balajis and Babas may make the best of their fabulous wealth to perpetuate themselves; but ultimately they have to be consigned to the dustbin, the only abode they deserve. People cannot be cheated for ever. Beware, Balaji! you shall be overthrown.

# PRESIDENT MEETS BALAJI

Ms. Vasandhra

(President Sanjiva Reddy has visited Tirupati mainly for a Darshan of the 'Lord' Venkateswara popularly known as 'Balaji' in North India. Ms. Vasundhra, Treasurer of I. R. A. tries to guess what would have been the conversation between the two, if only the stone idol could speak.....Ed.)

Mr. Sanjiva : Good morning, my Lord.

Mr. Balaji : Very good morning Mr. President! Welcome to my Temple. I hope you are all fine at Delhi.

Mr. Sanjiva : Yes, by your grace! You know this is my first tour after taking over the office of President.

Mr. Balaji : But you are coming to me so many days after you became President.

Mr. Sanjiva : You see, it took a few days for me to manage to get an invitation to make it an official trip.....

Mr. Balaji : Official? Does it mean you are coming here on Government account.

Mr. Sanjiva : You are trying to pull my legs. Don't you know that I never come to you entirely with my own money.

Mr. Balaji : But Mr. Sanjiva, please say that unless they came to me at their own cost they will not derive the benefit.

Mr. Sanjiva : True—State exchequer is meeting my travel expenses. But you know as a citizen I also pay taxes and I am thus a joint owner of the Government funds.

Mr. Balaji : Does it mean that all people who pay taxes can claim their travelling expenses from Government?

Mr. Sanjiva : Certainly not.

Mr. Balaji : What about your family members?

Mr. Sanjiva : Oh, my Lord!—you can't understand these complicated constitutional matters—let us come to business.

Mr. Balaji : OK—What can I do for you?

Mr. Sanjiva : First tell me, why did you defeat me at the last elections?

Mr. Balaji : I defeated you?

Mr. Sanjiva : Sorry—I meant that you didn't help me.

Mr. Balaji : Well—You know the background—voters were using their own conscience—My whip was



of avail. Nor I could change their conscience. This time I managed to make it a unanimous election. Voters could not wag their conscience.

Mr. Sanjiva : Anyway, I am happy that Mrs. Gandhi who was responsible for my defeat in 1969 has now tasted defeat herself. I want the same fate to be meted out to Mr. Giri and Mr. Brahmananda Reddy also.....

Mr. Balaji : My dear Reddy! Instead of praying for harm to others, why don't you ask for some good things for your own people.

Mr. Sanjiva : You are testing my patience. I am a Telugu man—You are a God demiciled in Andhra. You must know what pleases us.

Mr. Balaji : OK. I can't promise, but I shall try! Any other problem?

Mr. Sanjiva : Mrs. Gandhi is trying to improve her relations with J. P. and Vinobha. I am a bit worried that she might stage a come back and see the end of us.

Mr. Balaji : How can I prevent it? After all she used to visit me too. Anyway, I will try to prevent her come back!

Mr. Sanjiva : The next is about my residence—I have already expressed my desire to quit Rashtrapathi Bhavan and move to a 'smaller place'.

Mr. Balaji : You want to move to 'Hyderabad' house?

Mr. Sanjiva : No. Still smaller place—I prefer a house in Ananthapur. Alternatively, I don't mind somewhere in Karnool or.....

Mr. Balaji : I wonder. The President has to stay at the capital?

Mr. Sanjiva : Yes, you are right—that is the crux of the problem. I want you to shift the capital from Delhi to Ananthapur or Karnool

Mr. Balaji : But Delhi has been the seat of the rulers in India for centuries.

Mr. Sanjiva : That is why I am seeking your help. I hope you remember when it was a question of State Capital, I did it myself

Mr. Balaji : I think it is rather difficult. In any case, I will try. What is your next problem?

- Mr. Sanjiva : You fellow—for everything you say, 'I will try'—'I will look into it' Just like Kamaraj?
- Mr. Balaji : I agree. I cannot promise anything. Let me come out with a couple of my problems—see what best you can do?
- Mr. Sanjiva : You want my help?
- Mr. Balaji : Yes—Congress Regime did not release foreign exchange for a rope-way from Tirupathi to Tirumala. I understand foreign exchange reserves are now overflowing and your H. M. Patel does not know what to do with these reserves. Why don't you get the rope-way approved now?
- Mr. Sanjiva : It's easy—I shall discuss the matter with H. M. Patel. I am sure he will oblige you.
- Mr. Balaji : I have one more request. My devotees lack even basic amenities while standing in queue. Though they come all the way to Tirumala with great devotion for me, while standing in the queue, all the time they are cursing me! Can you do something in this?
- Mr. Sanjiva : Easy—I am straightaway sanctioning Rs. 50 lacs for providing all the modern amenities such as canteens, bathrooms etc. in an area of 3½ acres which can accommodate 14,000 people. OK?
- Mr. Balaji : Thank you so much, Mr. Reddy.
- Mr. Sanjiva : Swami, I have one request.
- Mr. Balaji : What is it?
- Mr. Sanjiva : My desire to visit Tirupathi first with my family is now fulfilled. I now want to take my family to States.
- Mr. Balaji : But I have no hold on Carter. I cannot make him invite you to America.
- Mr. Sanjiva : Of course if I want to make it an official trip I need an invitation. But we have liberal Service Rules. I can even take leave and go to America at Government expense.
- Mr. Balaji : Going on unofficial visit at Government's expense?
- Mr. Sanjiva : Yes, but I must make the trip on medical grounds.
- Mr. Balaji : You must then have an illness. Isn't it?
- Mr. Sanjiva : Exactly. You should therefore bless me with some ailment.
- Mr. Balaji : If you succumb to it?
- Mr. Sanjiva : My good god! What I want is a very very minor one absolutely free from any danger to my life.
- Mr. Balaji : If it is a minor one, our Indian doctors may themselves try to cure it. How will you then go to America?
- Mr. Sanjiva : You leave it to me, Swami. I have my own doctors to advise me to go to States even for common cold.
- Mr. Balaji : But other doctors in India may feel insulted and raise a big hue and cry.

- Mr. Sanjiva : Look, I am the President of India. I need not care for these fellows. I will tell my people that my life is precious and I need the best medical attention available in the world. Though not the doctors, at least my illiterate people would believe that all best things are available only in States.
- Mr. Balaji : OK—I leave it to you. Right now I am blessing you with a harmless coin lesion in your lungs. Enjoy yourself with your family in States.
- Mr. Sanjiva : Thank you, my Lord. May I take leave of you?
- Mr. Balaji : Just one word, Mr. Reddy. I reliably understand that I.R.A. is bringing out a special issue on me.....
- Mr. Sanjiva : I too heard so.....
- Mr. Balaji : Can you not prevent it with all the political power you have?
- Mr. Sanjiva : Sorry Sir, we have promised full press freedom. We cannot go back on our assurances, though we all regret what we have promised. I learn they are not going to spare me either. I have already received letters from them asking me not to go over here at the cost of State exchequer. Can you not therefore prevent it with your divine power?
- Mr. Balaji : Sorry, Sanjiva! I can use my divine powers only on my own believers and not on these rationalists! They are incorrigible.
- Mr. Sanjiva : So you say we have to accept their rebukes.
- Mr. Balaji : I do not think there is any way out.
- Mr. Sanjiva : O, K. Sir, let me make a move. My staff are waiting outside.
- Mr. Balaji : All the best! Visit me again after your return from States.

### CHAPPALS (AL) MIGHTIER?

Since I was brought up in a rationalistic way by my father who was a staunch follower of Periyar E. V. R., only once I had an occasion to go to Tirupathi. That was when I went there to write my P. U. C. Exams. There were another 30 girls or so in our batch sponsored by our Tutorial College.

After our exams were over, all the girls wanted to go up the Hill and have a darshan of 'Lord' Venkateswara. After reaching the Temple, I preferred to stay out watching the chappals of my friends while all the others had a darshan of the 'Lord' and get his blessings for success in exams.

Lo and behold! when the results were out, in the entire group I was the only person to get through the exams. I still wonder whether it was a sheer accident or whether the chappals were more powerful than the stone idol!

Ms. Sumitra, Madras.



# BACK TO SQUARE ONE

by

Margaret Bhatti

[We are pleased to introduce the authoress who is a Writer and a Journalist with a background of teaching. She has been concerned with producing enlightened secular literature for children in which values are based on humanism with no reference to religious superstition. - Ed]

The propaganda against sterilisation, and the reappearance of obscurantism and bigotry in our population control programme is a giant step backwards. It is also a serious set-back for women because all religions are a conspiracy against their legitimate rights as humans. These benighted views must finally prove a threat to our survival as a nation with a viable culture and ethos. Demographic imbalance will result in the swamping out by a larger and less aware section of the smaller more discriminating classes where values are perpetuated through an educated awareness.

It is not enough for Raj Narain to pronounce the magic switch-word like a mantra to disperse evil with its positive vibrations, and declare that Family Planning will now be known as Family Welfare. It is centuries too late to start delving into ancient scriptures for a new concept to govern husband-wife relations, as he suggests. The wide-spread use of contraceptives has corrupted our social life, says he. He should know since he is

unmarried. It is always men outside the situation of women who seem to have the best theories concerning it.

## Compulsory Sterilisation :

I believe in compulsory sterilisation as I believe in compulsory inoculation and vaccination. Where motivation or persuasion fails, disincentives and pressure must be used. In the first case we are protected from the catastrophe of plague and pestilence. In the second case from the catastrophe of over-population. In both cases the state has a duty towards its citizens.

It is no longer considered decent to speak for compulsory sterilisation. And to talk of forcing it on men is supposedly an inhuman and barbarous extreme. But let us take a look at the other side of the coin. I am amazed at the mentality of supposedly educated economists and demographers whenever they put forward the theory that birth-control is not feasible for the farmer or the poor because one extra mouth also means two extra hands to work. But where does such reasoning put women?

Initially they are regarded as free labour. When they marry they become a means to produce more free labour. The more sons they conceive, the better their stock. Too many daughters reflects on a man. It suggests he has a sickly seed and a debilitated sexual impulse. Those women who produce nothing are rejected—like infertile cows. No stigma is worse in certain sections of Indian society, particularly in the rural areas, than the reproach of barrenness. Because fertility in women is valued for its economic advantages, their gender leads to their sexual exploitation. They must breed—like livestock. But is there any national outcry or indignation in the press over their plight? In the sterilisation programme the victims were men. Hence all the heat, hot air and indignation.

### Religious Validity ?

Where are we now? Back to square one. There is no recognisable population control policy evident at this moment. Population control methods, the experts say, must be socially acceptable and religiously valid. Do any methods fulfil these terms? The dismal failure of our population control programme in the last thirty years is proof enough of the futility of such thinking.

When I read in the papers that Muslim religious leaders have put forward the plea that sterilisation should be left to choice, I think of the Housecoat-wallah who comes round to our neighbourhood every Thursday. He hails from Aligarh but must earn his living in Bombay. He tells me with proper pride that he has sixteen children though he lost five. Birth-control? He will not hear of it. Neither will he allow his begum to be sterilised for then he could no longer ensure her fidelity. He sees sterilisation in men as a kind of castration which will render him eunuch. Besides, every additional child he sires underscores his own essential masculinity, and is an extension of an overblown and monstrous egotism anctioned in him by his religion.

### Contraceptive Choice ?

Should a contraceptive choice be allowed to men of such mentality ?

There used to be two little ragged lads down my street, pot-bellied and with the red hair that comes from malnutrition. Their mother, a thin emaciated and very young woman worked in surrounding buildings as a domestic drudge. At mid-day she came down to the street with left-overs given her by housewives and fed them. When she was delayed and they grew very hungry, they came and knocked on my door. For some time now I have not seen them around. The chowkidar of our block tells me the woman is expecting another child and keeps such poor health that she cannot work any more. But her husband is a waster and scrounged off her. What will they eat now? How will they support another child? Who knows the answers? Do they know, these men who are now going to search the Vedas? And should this fellow be allowed the privilege of contraceptive choice without any reference to the woman who is his victim each time he impregnates her?

5

### AVOIDING BALAJI

It is generally believed that Balaji is most benevolent and helps all his devotees. Only instances where success in various fields could be attributed to the 'God' of Tirumalai are given the widest publicity.

Here is a case with a difference. A family of believers suffered bereavement after bereavement in spite of (as a result of?) their visits to Tirumalai.

According to Mr. V. Chandrasekhar, a Grade I Office Superintendent in Indian Navy at Bombay, their family lost his nephew soon after their first visit to Tirupati in 1950. He then lost his brother immediately after the second visit in 1956. Again in 1966, after they visited Tirumalai he lost his cousin.

They did not repeat the mistake after the third calamity! Though they have later gone on pilgrimages from Rishikesh to Kanyakumari they have scrupulously avoided Tirupathi in their itinerary!!

### Catholics' Unnatural Method

In Catholic countries artificial contraception, sterilisation and abortion are illegal and "sinful". Only the natural method is allowed. This is not only time-consuming but not fool-proof either. Stress and other factors often upset the rhythm of ovulation. Many women confess their latent fear of an unwanted pregnancy prevents their enjoyment of sex. But this hardly concerns the Pope, or the entire hierarchy of celibate priests entrusted with the task of keeping women from sinning against God.

Much was made of the project undertaken by the nuns of Mother Theresa's mission to promote the natural method among the slum-dwellers of Calcutta. This is another example of the kind of eye-wash common to all religions. Knowing the conditions that prevail in this class of society, and the scant value that men place upon their women, are we to believe that wives secure their husbands' full co-operation? When they stagger home much the worse for drink, or when they merely wish to relieve the pressures of an intolerable livelihood, do they stop to ask their wives if they are "safe" before they mount them? It would be naive to assume that they do. But this is the assumption on which the natural method of birth-control seeks to function. It depends entirely on the goodwill of the man. Also, taking vaginal temperatures and plotting fertility graphs demands a certain level of education. How many women in our slums are able to do that? The natural method as suggested by the Catholic church is heavily slanted against women. But divinely ordained—by men.

### Unwanted Pregnancy

"More than half the world's couples go to bed each night unprotected from unplanned pregnancy," says a Worldwatch Institute

report. According to Bruce Stokes, a researcher in family-planning: "For such men and women the decision of whether and when to have a child is seldom a real decision at all; but a fumbling exercise of out-dated and frequently futile and often dangerous family-planning practices."

The truth is it is not planning at all, but a mindless coupling in which the final spasm for the man is another evacuation, for the woman another unwanted pregnancy. And for the nation another step closer to chaos.

The compulsory sterilisation programme was declared a failure. It was not. It was a success in the case of every man who deserved to be sterilised, and was. What failed was the moral courage to carry it through. Political expediency and religious bigotry saw to that.

### Sexual Oppression

Indignant peasants, convinced by politicians that their masculinity was threatened, swung the vote in the last election. But if women were to learn to speak out and do something about their sexual oppression what could they not achieve. The only reply that remains to frequent unwanted and irresponsible enforced pregnancies in the case of woman appears to be the compulsory sterilisation of the men who make them victims each time in the belief that they are exercising a God-given right.

### To the nuns

Nuns!  
Open your eyes!  
The virgin land  
does not yield  
fruitful trees.

# HOW BALAJI'S COFFER SWELLS

T. S. Selvaraj

## Robbers' Booty Shared

Vishnu Varma and his associates commit a murder and bolt away with the dead man's money. They go to Tirupati and deposit part of their booty in the 'hundi' and offer worship by a "Sahasranama archana". A month passes. There is no sign of police being on their scent. Emboldened, they spot out another rich man and kill him. They again go to Tirupathi and put a part of their ill-gotten money in the 'hundi'. A long time after, the police apprehend them but they are discharged by court for want of evidence. Verily, their prayers have been answered. Their god is not a dispenser of justice but a receiver of bribes!

## Borrowed Credit

Ramaswami is a rich man. Although it is ten years since he was married, his wife has not yet presented him with a child. Ramaswami is worried. He prays to the Tirupati God and takes a vow that if a son is born to him, he will drop in the 'hundi' a miniature gold image of his son. At the same time he consults doctors and takes their advice. His wife is treated for sterility. After some time she conceives and they have a son. Ramaswami is overjoyed and he fulfills his vow. Whether the doctors who diagnosed the reasons for his not having a child and treated his wife are to be thanked or god is a matter of no consequence to him. He has faith in god as well as doctors.

## Doctor Cures, Tirupathi Rewarded

Krishnaswami's son is laid down with a raging fever. Doctors diagnose meningitis. They declare the chances of survival as fifty-fifty. Krishnaswami is in anguish. He retires to the 'puja' room and prays to his family deity, the god of Tirupati. "Oh Lord!" he cries, "pray, save my son from the clutches of death. As soon as he recovers, I shall come clad in saffron cloth along with him and my wife and put Rs.1,000/- in your 'hundi'."

At the same time he does not lose faith in doctors and procures expert medical aid. The fever abates. The patient improves. Doctors pronounce him out of the wood. True to his word, though miser he is, Krishnaswami goes to Tirupati, offers worship and deposits Rs. 2,000/- in the hundi doubling what he had promised god, for he is so much elated at the recovery of his only son.

Ordinarily Krishnaswami would not part with a paise to a beggar or help deserving causes even with a small contribution. Now what prompted him to part with such a large chunk of his savings? Who cured his son? Doctors or God?

Krishnaswami knows for certain it was the expert medical skill and guidance that saved his son. But he dare not express so openly. At the back of his mind is the lurking fear that if he does not propitiate

FREE THOUGHT





god his wrath might be on him or his son. Do not doctors themselves advise their patients to place their faith in god and take medicine?

### Fear and Intimidation

The dichotomy of mind illustrated above viz belief in the efficacy of science as well as in a supernatural force is not peculiar to Krishnaswamy or Ramaswami. The majority of mankind behave similarly. It is a manifestation of the fear ingrained in man from which in spite of years of advancement he has not outgrown. When pressed to explain, most men will rationalise that god does not act by himself but only through agents like doctors, priests, mantravadis etc.

### Failures Forgotten

Then what about cases where prayers have not been answered? The failures are easily forgotten. They do not stick in the memories of people. They are attributed to god's wrath for defaults unknowingly committed. This makes people more penitent and put more money and valuables in the hundi. Those that had their wishes

## TIRUPATI PRASADAM FAILS

I did make history when I was in my B. A. class and was dismissed from College - for contributing an article to the 'Critic'. I was suspended for a week. The suspension was prolonged for a month. Friends pleaded that I should approach the Principal and offer him an apology. But I would not budge, for I was too sure that I did not commit any crime. A lawyer friend of the family, gave me a large-sized Mithai Vundac (Venkateswara Prasadam), and said that I should have no objection to go to the Principal's house and give the Prasadam to him. "He is a Brahmu, and he might regard it as an insult to him", I said. He gave me a long lecture that even athiests would not dare to insult 'Lord' Venkateswara's Prasadam. After all flesh is flesh and is too weak to stand up firm to principles. I went to the principal's house and offered the prasadam to him. He asked me to sit down and tell him what I wished to say. I said, nothing sir', and left his room, leaving the Principal aghast at my behaviour. The prasadam did no magic at all and I was dismissed.

— B. N. R.

(Courtesy - 'VIJAYA DURGA')

fulfilled are all praise for the god, become more reverent, do more puja and put more money in the hundi. Either way god is benifitted while the foolish devotee is impoverished.

#### Similar to Corrupt Official

The Tirupati god-and for that matter any god-is made analogous to a tax inspector who for consideration helps people pay lesser tax than due, defrauding the government while enriching himself.

The belief that god responds to prayers whether legitimate or illegitimate, has a very strong hold in most men's minds because of their utter incapacity to think and reason out clearly and their susceptibility to the fallacy of "Post hoc, propter hoc" which means if one thing follows another, the second is the effect of the first. If one prays for rain and there is rain then rain is the effect of prayer.

#### Anti-socials Frequent Tirupati

Arguing on this basis, all the anti-social elements like smugglers, black marketers, criminals as well as the gullible and ignorant go to Tirupati. At their expense and patronage the Tirupati god has been growing richer and richer. Tirupati Venkateswara is the 'Birla' among the gods of India. Compared to him Subramania of Palani, Tiruchendur or Tirutani is only mediocre. If there are two houses of business in the same locality, naturally the better advertised one gets more business. So it is with Tirupati which is publicised from Himalayas to Cape Comorin.

People from all parts of India flock to Tirupati. For what purpose? Purely for a business transaction - they expect the fulfilment of their wishes for all the trouble they take in travelling and parting with money and valuables.

## PRESIDENT'S (A)THEISM!?

The following is an extract of President Sanjiva Reddy's message broadcast to the nation on 2-9-77 on the eve of his departure for States.

"We are all in the hands of Almighty God and as I take leave of you to place myself under the very best of medical attention available, my thoughts will be with you all".

Obviously there is a mistake in the above message. The word 'we' at the beginning of his sentence should read 'you' meaning that the other Indians were left to the mercy of 'God'. Alternatively, the phrase 'Almighty God', should read as 'Almighty Gods' since in his opinion there may be at least two Gods — One in U. S. A. exclusively for him (Indian God not being powerful enough) and the other in India to take care of the unfortunate 700 million people!

Can anyone think of a more logical explanation?

# IS BALAJI SECULAR AND SEXLESS?

By A. Suryanarayana

(A few points about the origin of Tirumala Shrine raised in the Telugu Book "Ooloki Swamulavaru Venchesaru" provoked our resourceful General Secretary, Mr. A. Suryanarayana to write the following illuminating article — Ed)

'Lord' Venkateswara — popularly known as Balaji in North India — the presiding deity of Tirumala is believed to be a Hindu Vaishnavite male God. But is he really a Hindu God? If so, is he a Vaishnavite God? Is he a male? These are some of the puzzling questions that arise from a critical study of the historical, archaeological and ancient literary sources available on the subject.

## HINDUS' VERSION

Once Devas conducted a 'Yagna' and the problem arose as to who should get the fruits of the Yagna. Maharshi Bhrugu was appointed as the one man commission to decide the deserving candidate from among Brahma, Siva and Vishnu — the three Big Powers of the Hindus.

Bhrugu went to Brahma's place only to find Brahma enjoying himself with 'Gana Bajana' with, of course, his own wife, Saraswathi singing and playing on Veena. When Bhrugu found that he was not being received, he got annoyed and cursed Brahma that he would have no temples on the planet earth.

Thereafter, he went to 'Kailash' to assess the merits of Siva. He then felt Brahma was better as he found Siva and his wife Parvathi indulging in unpublishable deeds. He once again was enraged and cursed Siva that at Siva's

temples only his linga would be worshipped and merely 'Holy Ash' (nothing but cow-dung reduced to ash) would be served as Prashad.

Finally, he reached 'Vaikunta' to test Vishnu. The situation there convinced Bhrugu that Siva was better. Bhrugu could no longer compose himself and kicked Vishnu on his chest. Lakshmi, who was happily lying on her husband's chest, was hurt and insulted. She quit the place and went away to planet earth. Not being able to bear the pangs of separation from Lakshmi, Vishnu followed her to Earth to do penance. After a long stay, finally he became a stone and settled down at Tirumala. Thus, according to present popular version 'Venkateswara' was an incarnation of Vishnu and so he is a Vaishnavite God.



## IS HE A SAIVITE, VEERABHADRA?

There is, however, another School of thought that Venkateswara was originally a Saivite God. According to this school, the idol was originally that of Veerabhadra Swamy. They contend that when the fight between Saivites and Vaishnavites was at its peak, the Vaishnavites changed the figure of the idol into what it is now with huge 'namam' (caste mark) covering almost the entire face. The fact that even today the Saivite priests participate in the daily temple rituals lends weight to this theory. According to these historians, it was Ramanujacharya who had stealthily converted the Veerabhadra Swami Temple at Tirumala into a Vaishnavite temple for Venkateswara.

## BALAJI — MALE OR FEMALE?

There is yet another group among Hindus who believe that this idol was originally that of Godeess Bala Tripura Sundari. They argue that the name Bala-ji being popularly used in North India for this God or Goddess was derived from the name Bala by adding 'ji' as a mark of respect. Hats off to our Hindu priests for the sex-change operation performed centuries ago!

## WAS BALAJI A JAIN GOD?

According to one more rather seemingly strange version of some historians, it is possible that Tirumala Temple was initially a Jain temple till around 800 A.D. According to them, even during the days of Kakatiya Dynasty, though Buddhism was almost extinct, Jainism was still going strong. It was then left to Saivites to annihilate Jainism in the areas presently included in the States of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. It was during these days, many of the Jain idols were replaced with Saivite idols. It is, therefore, likely that some of the nude Jain statues were reshaped into those of 'Veerabhadra' a Saivite God. To drive home their point, these historians cite the presence of Jain idols in many Hindu Temples even as on date.

## SHAVING OF HEAD, A MUSLIM CUSTOM

There is also a version according to which Venkateswara married a Muslim girl, 'Bibi Nanchari'. Some others, of course, opine that he did not marry her but only kept her as a concubine! In either case, his muslim connection is not disputed. Another reason advanced to substantiate this claim is the practice of clean-shaving of the heads in vogue at Tirumala. This habit of shaving the heads was not found in any other Hindu temple. (Of course, now as it has proved to be a good source of income, other temples at Simhachalam and Annavaram in Andhra Pradesh, Palani and Tirutani in Tamilnadu etc., have also encouraged this practice). We also do not find any reference to this habit of shaving the heads in Ramayana or Mahabharata nor even in any of the 18 Puranas. Obviously this custom has been borrowed either from Jains or Muslims. This fact therefore lends support to the theories that this temple was earlier patronised either by Jains or by Muslims. (But today unfortunately large hoardings are put up at the foot of the hill banning entry to all non-hindus!).

## STRIP BALAJI NAKED

It is true that all the above versions are confusing. One thing is, however, certain. There is a mystery behind the present presiding deity Venkateswara. The heavy make-up, especially the awkwardly large 'Namam' (covering not only the forehead but also almost the entire face of the idol) along with the many historical facts, give room for suspecting the bonafides of Balaji. If we have to unfold the mystery and find out whether he is truly Venkateswara, Veerabhadra Swami, Bala Tripura Sundari, a Jain idol or something else, the first thing that the Devasthanam Authorities have to do is to remove the clothing and other make-up materials from the figure and expose it naked before a team of Archaeologists and Historians.

\* \*



## A SIKH TURNED RATIONALIST

### An Interview with Mr. Khushwant Singh

It was a rainy day when your Editor called on Mr. Khushwant Singh, Editor of the prestigious 'Illustrated Weekly of India'. After exchanging pleasantries over a cup of tea, Mr. Khushwant Singh asked your Editor to shoot the questions.

Mr. Singh was born in an orthodox Sikh family in which religious education and practice were compulsory. He went for higher studies to United Kingdom where he avidly took to Russell and Julian Huxley's writings. By the age of 30 he was a total convert to rationalism.

Mr. Singh came back to India and practised Law. He nostalgically recalled the days he spent in Lahore with Mr. Manzur Qadir, an agnostic, who later became the Foreign Minister of Pakistan.

He had a chequered career. He was in the Indian Foreign Service for 5 years and then with UNESCO. Subsequently he was a Professor of Comparative Religion in Princeton University, U. S. A. when he published the 'History of Sikhs' in two volumes. He assumed editorship of 'Illustrated Weekly' in 1969.

**Q :** What is your conception of Rationalism?

**A :** I have been a Rationalist for about 30 years and do not have any faith of any kind. I do not believe in ceremonies. Due to my upbringing, I enjoy listening to 'kirthans', of course,



with a glass of whisky in my hand. You could describe me as an agnostic. (He does not attach importance to the appellation 'Singh' nor to his beard - saying he is known with them for 4 or 5 decades.)

**Q :** What do you think of the hold of Sikhism on Panjabis?

**A :** It is indoctrination that has brought about this. Education alone can cure this. Compulsory religious education warps children's minds.

**Q :** We find that your writings on Rationalism are mild. Can you please tell us why?

A : I feel that we should not offend the susceptibilities of other people. We will have to educate them to win them over.

Q : How do you think Rationalism can be spread in India?

A : We should liberate the minds of people. A course on Rationalism should be introduced in Colleges. Propagation should be conducted through the public media. I agree that the press and the periodicals have considered religion to be too big an issue to fight. However, through persistent efforts we can make them allot a reasonable space for spreading Rationalism.

#### **POLITICS AND I. R. A.**

Q : Should I. R. A. become political?

A : I feel that much is to be gained by keeping away from politics.

Q : What will you consider as a Secular Government?

A : In my view, Secular Government does not mean respect for all religions. It implies that the Government keep away from all religions. Perhaps, the Government's idea of secularism could be gauged by Sardar Baldev Singh, our Ex-defence Minister's pronunciation 'Seculiar' (rhyming with peculiar!).

Q : What do you think of the change in the Government at the Centre?

A : I believe it is a reactionary Government with the counter revolutionary attitude of Jana Sangh.

#### **KUNDALANI IS NONSENSE**

Q : What do you think of transcendental meditation?

A : Mr. Apa Pant who is in the Foreign Service gave me a book on Surya Namaskar. I asked him whether it would make any difference if instead of 'Om' I used the term 'shit' and meditated on it! I consider kundalani as a bunch of nonsense. A few persons like Karanjia who have lost confidence in themselves are wasting their time and energy on it.

Q : Do you believe in cow slaughter?

A : I subscribe to vegetarianism and do not make a distinction between cow and pig.

#### **AMERICAN LUNATICS FOLLOW SWAMIJIS**

Q : Any Comments on our Swamis flourishing in U. S. A.?

A : The followers are the lunatic fringe among the Americans. They are mostly drug addicts. I would not say that Swamis are flourishing nor are they important in U. S. A.

Mr. Khushwant Singh got his daughter married without ceremonies. His son, Mr. Rahul Singh, a Journalist is a remarkable Rationalist who has evinced interest in Dr. Koveer's lectures and books.

Your Editor took leave of Mr. Khushwant Singh emboldened that our Advisor will help us to further Rationalism.

# NEWS AND NOTES

## **Cholera saves common man from Tirupathi?**

The Minister of Endowments of Andhra Pradesh said that this time, no special buses would be run for the Brahmotsavam (Sep. 15 to 23) to Tirupathi. This was being done to reduce the flow of pilgrims to attend the festival.

The Minister said that when a suggestion for postponing the Brahmotsavam because of the epidemic was made to him, he consulted Sankaracharya and the Jeeyar of Tirumala Temple who felt that Brahmotsavam should not be postponed. Business as usual at the cost of human lives!

## **SUPRABHATHAM BY A GOVERNOR - SECULARISM, MY FOOT!**

The Governor of Tamilnadu who was the chief guest at the 28th annual Suprabhatham prize distribution function held by the Tirumala - Tirupathi Devasthanam at the TTD Information Centre in Thyagarayanagar, Madras, said Venkatesa Suprabhatham was one of the most popular devotional songs (understatement of the year!). He welcomed the efforts of the temple authorities in encouraging the youth to recite the prayer so that they would remain in a spiritual atmosphere. In this country such traditions enabled us to sustain spiritual excellence in life, in spite of hardships and handicaps, he said (yes, to remain dumb cattle!).

Mr. Patwari was glad that the TTD was making judicious use of the offerings(!).

The Deputy Executive Officer, who explained the activities of the TTD Information Centre said that it was propagating devotional songs and conducting religious courses. He presented a large-sized picture of Venkateswara to the Governor.

Mr J. V. Somayajulu, on behalf of the Suprabhatham Committee, said the TTD information Centre was the biggest of its kind rendering valuable 'service' to the devotees of Venkateswara.

Courtesy: 'THE HINDU', - 13-6-1977

## **Cholera challenge to Balaji-Toll of six.**

Nearly 15,000 people have been inoculated against cholera in the pilgrim town till 8th September, 1977. Six persons had died of cholera till then.

The Devasthanam authorities were reported to be seriously considering whether or not to postpone the Brahmotsavam, scheduled to begin on September 15th.

## **Boat ride in dirty pond costs Rs. 1500/-**

Arjitha Tappotsavam is performed every Tuesday at 6-30p.m. The 'Lord' is taken round in the Swami Pushkarani (a pond) in a gaily decorated float to the accompaniment of nadaswaram and Veda parayanam.

Devotees can participate in this special function by offering Rs. 1,500/-!

Courtesy: Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanams' Advertisement in the 'Hindu'

## **Tirupathi's unfothomable gold reserves.**

219 50 kg. of gold was unloaded by the devasthanam committee in the Bombay

bullion market in one week (prior to 27-4-77) at Rs. 611/- per 10 grammes realising Rs. 134 lacs. The previous lot of 94.50kg. was sold at Rs. 608/- per 10 grammes on April 20th to three traders on a single day.

The devasthanam committee is still holding some 350 kg. of gold.

Earlier, 335kg. of gold had been sold in the Bombay bullion market till the end of January this year. The 535kg. had fetched the committee Rs. 304 lacs.

### **Richest Temple Goes Untaxed**

The richest devasthanam in the country with an **annual income exceeding Rs. 12 crores**, the TTD used to occasionally auction gold received from devotees in the 'hundi' till 1965 when the Gold Control Order put a stop to such sales.

Last year, after obtaining clearance from the Centre, the TTD melted and converted into standard gold 1,000 kg. of gold which is now kept in the Government mint in Bombay and is being sold in the bullion market there. Recently the Centre permitted the TTD to convert another 300kg. for sale as standard gold.

According to informed sources, there has been no reappraisal of the value of gold jewels and diamonds of the TTD during the past one decade or so. Before the Gold Control Order came into force, the TTD used to dispose of the gold mostly in the form of ornaments.

— Courtesy: 'The Hindu',- 27-4-1977

### **TAX THE TEMPLES**

One-quarter of Rome is in the hands of the Vatican, writes the Italian magazine L'Europeo in an article on landownership.

The enumeration of plots of land, houses and palaces belonging to the Holy See has taken up seven pages of the magazine. The greater part of this real estate is fully or partly tax-exempt.

L'Europeo mentions instances of the former living quarters of the clergy being rebuilt for commercial purposes. The Franciscan Sisters, for instance, sold one of their houses to a private firm for 1,100 million lire. The latter tore it down to make place for a luxury hotel which it sold for 4,500 million lire to a Vatican-controlled company.

### **WHY BRIBE VENKATESWARA?**

From time immemorial, the practice of propitiating Gods has continued. Either as advance payment or as rewards, offerings are made to Gods, both in cash and kind. Money in any denomination, material objects of any kind seem to be acceptable to Venkateswara. Replicas of human limbs are offered as reward for curing ailment affecting that particular limb. Promises are made to Gods like, 'If my toothache is cured, I shall present a golden tooth to Tirupathi Temple.' 'If I pass the exam, I shall come to Sabarimala next year and break a ghee-filled coconut at the door-step of Ayyappa.'

Recently Income-tax people unearthed a veritable treasure from a priest in Central Bombay which included about 2000 items of Gold and Silver such as Elephants, Horses, peacocks, vessels, plates, rosari malas and miniature bathing ghat. The estimate of the seizure is Rs. 1.38 crores including Rs. 2.45 lakhs found in cash. The poor gullibles seldom know that the priest and his family are the recipients of the offerings made by them and not the God.



There are many richmen who are stingy in spending money or paying their servants but are lavish in spending money on poojas and yagnas or giving donations to temples. All these speak for the system of propitiating Gods introduced by the clever brahmin class to exploit the remaining classes. In spite of the new horizons in science and technology, it is a pity that vast majority of Indian people still willingly submit to be exploited in the name of God and Religion.

—G. Viswanathan.

### KAMPISSERIL KARUNAKARAN DEAD

The sad news of the demise of Kampisseril Karunakaran on 27th July, 1977 in Trivandrum was a rude shock to the rationalists of Kerala. This self made man founded and edited the progressive and popular Malayalam Weekly 'Janayugam'. Through this weekly, he gave wide publicity to the crusade of Dr. A. T. Koor against Sathya Sai Baba whose devotees threatened that he would be dragged to court. But he stood firm like a rock against heavy odds.

His last wish was that his mortal remains should be buried **without any religious rites**. The customary brass lamp was not lit. Grief-stricken people assembled at his ancestral home, Kampisseril and witnessed the lowering of the corpse in a pit.

### FEUDING FANATICS

Two groups of an American sect of religious fanatics are deeply divided over which of them has been chosen by God to lead. The head of one of these groups, Dr. Rulon Allred, was recently shot dead in his surgery. The person suspected of engineering the assassination is his rival, Ervil le Baron. The feud has been going on for many years and has cost the lives of 21 people. But the members of the groups are not worried; there are ample reserves to replenish their ranks. Both groups practise polygamy, Dr. Allred had nine wives and 46 children and Mr. Le Baron has eight wives.

### AHMEDABAD UNIT OF G. R. A.

Ahmedabad Unit of Gujarat Rationalist Association convened its General Body Meeting on 18-9-1977.

Mr. Kamalashanker L. Pandya, President of Indian Rationalist Association, presided over the meeting.

The following Office Bearers have been elected.

1. President :  
Prof. Jitendra Dholakia
2. Vice Presidents :  
Mr. Harobhai Mehta (Advocate)  
Mr. Jivanbhai Shah (Advocate)  
Prof. Jagdish Vyas  
Prof. Prabash Sharma
3. General Secretaries :  
Mr. C. K. Balan  
Mr. Narendra Dave
4. Secretaries :  
Mr. Pravinbhai Rashtrapal  
Mr. Vinay Kapadia (Advocate)

Fourteen members were elected to the Executive Committee.

### MICRO MIRACLES!

Seventy elephants and their drivers are seen walking over a bridge which is 10 mm. long. The entire procession is sculptured on a single human hair. This is a recent work by Eduard Kazaryan, a well-known Armenian micro-miniaturist. Nothing short of a microscope can help one penetrate the world of his micromiracles. One of his works is a gallery of 62 portraits of outstanding philosophers, poets, scientists and composers, rendered in oil on a 6 mm long hair. In another work the artist 'placed' within a human hair a stadium where a football game is being played. The figures of football players are made of microspecks of precious stones.

Kazaryan's microminiatures will soon be shipped to a Soviet exhibition in Los Angeles (USA).

# Test for your Reason

A. Suryanarayana

(This is a new feature we are introducing to enable you to test your power to think logically. It has been decided to give a prize in the form of books worth Rs. 10/- to the winning candidate. If the correct entries are more than one, the prize will be decided on lots. The contest is open only to I. R. A. Members and FREETHOUGHT-subscribers. Please therefore quote your membership or subscription number. Last date for receipt of entries is 15th October, 1977

... .. Ed )

## SELECTION OF MANAGER

A leading business house wanted to appoint a General Manager. The Selection Committee picked up three candidates with extraordinary calibre.

The Chairman, to choose the best among them, subjected all the three candidates to an I. Q. test. He asked the three, Alfred, Bill and Christopher to sit one behind the other. Christopher could see both Bill and Alfred sitting in front of him and Bill could see Alfred alone and Alfred could see none.

He then showed them five hats — three black in colour and the other two white. He told them he would select any three hats and place them on their heads. The person who calls out correctly the colour of the hat placed on his head would be adjudged winner. The three were then blind folded and three hats

selected by the Chairman were placed on their heads and their eyes were opened. He first asked Christopher whether he could call out the colour of his hat. Almost at once Christopher said 'No'. When asked similarly, Bill also conceded that he could not guess either. When the Chairman came to Alfred, he said quickly — 'Sir my hat is black'.

The Chairman patted him and said "Well Alfred, you are my General Manager". Alfred protested "Thank you Sir, but I am not happy at my victory. I am sure that if the other two had been seated in my place they too could have called out correctly. I was in an advantageous position".

Can you find out Alfred's reasoning?

Solutions and name(s) of winners in our next issue.



## AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AN APPEAL

We are grateful to the following for their generous donations:

### For FREETHOUGHT

Dr. V. M. Bhargava, Hyderabad	Rs. 25 00
Mr. V. K. Chiranjivi Rao, Anakapalle	13 00
Mr. Era Narasimhan, Madras	10 00
Mr. Kondalah, Madras	40 00
Mr. S. Selva Ganapathy, Madras	15 00
Mr. S. R. Gupta, Madras	60 00
Less than Rs. 5-00	3 00
As per September 1977 issue	544 00
	710 00

### For INTER MARRIAGE BUREAU

Mr. V. M. Marudachalam, Madras	10 00
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Other Sympathizers of the Rationalist Movement are also requested to help the journal financially.

—Treasurer, I. R. A.

## NEW MEMBERS

We heartily welcome the following New Members:

### Ordinary Members

M-421	Dr. I. J. S. Jaswal, M. Sc., Ph. D.	Shillong (Meghalaya)
M-422	Mr. A. K. Ramaraju, B. A., B. T.	Madras (Tamilnadu)
M-423	Mr. Susarla Subramanyam	Bheemunipatnam (Vizag)
M-424	Mr. P. V. Jayaprakash, B. Sc.	Bombay (Maharashtra)
M-425	Mr. I. K. Natarajan	Ilanji (Tenkasi)

### Student Members

S-36	Mr. Ravi Narayana	Warangal (A. P.)
S-37	Mr. B. Vodelu (Intermediate)	Jagtial (A. P.)
S-38	Mr. CH Ramesh Babu	Eluru (A. P.)

General Secretary—I. R. A.

## OUR FORTHCOMING ISSUES

November, 1977 issue of FREETHOUGHT will be devoted to 'Superstition' and Ban on cow 'slaughter'.

December, 1977 issue will be brought out as an Annual Special Number with more pages and more articles on wide ranging topics including Rationalist Movement. All well wishers are requested to send Advertisements for this issue to meet the extra cost. Tariff : Back cover—double colour Rs. 250/-; Inside cover : Rs. 150/-; Full Page : Rs. 100/-; Half Page : Rs. 50/-.

Contributors may please ensure that articles are received by 10th of the previous month.

## I. R. A'S MONOGRAM

The picture on the left is I. R. A's Monogram approved by the Managing Committee on 4-9-77.

In the Monogram, I. R. A. is depicted as a Light House built on a strong rocky foundation of Reason standing out triumphantly amidst darkness symbolising religion and superstition. You will see the Light House beaming out on either side, the light rays representing Science and Humanism — the two essential results of rationalism and requirements for the progress of mankind.

A victory for Reason is a victory for I. R. A.!

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

The photo on the right is that of Mr. Arczika Ponnusamy who made the above Monogram for I. R. A. Mr. Ponnusamy was born on 2-1-1949 in Chitheri in Tanjore District. After completing a 5-year Course in Fine Arts at the Government College of Arts & Crafts, Madras, he has also secured a Post Diploma in Industrial Designing (Wood Work).

He is at present attached to the Geology Department of Government Museum, Madras. He has scores of cartoons and pictures to his credit. For the past few months FREETHOUGHT also carries cartoons by Mr. Ponnusamy who is an active member of I. R. A.

